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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 528
By Henry

A RESOLUTION to recognize the good people of WSM-AM for their devotion to country music and for maintaining their "classic country music" format.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to recognize those estimable organizations and individuals who have made significant contributions to the cultural fabric of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, WSM-AM is one such laudable institution that has brought unparalleled fame and honor to this state during its more than seventy-six years of broadcasting excellence; and

WHEREAS, with a nod to their historic past, the management of WSM-AM, under the astute leadership of Gaylord Entertainment Co. Chief Executive Officer Colin Reed, recently made the laudable decision to maintain a traditional "classic country" format, building upon the station's storied past and confident of attaining even greater heights of success; and

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WHEREAS, through their prodigious service, the management and employees of WSM-AM, both past and present, have contributed significantly to the growth and prosperity of this state and its economy; and

WHEREAS, WSM-AM first hit America's airwaves on October 5, 1925, originally owned by the National Life and Accident Insurance Company and deriving its name from the owner's motto, "We Shield Millions"; and

WHEREAS, before the year was out, WSM launched a program that would bring the station and Nashville worldwide fame, "The WSM Barn Dance," which later became known as "The Grand Ole Opry"; and

WHEREAS, from the beginning, the station was tremendously successful; its meteoric rise was powered by a formidable 50,000-watt, clear-channel signal that can still be heard in up to thirty-five states; and

WHEREAS, as the program grew in popularity, "The Grand Ole Opry" gradually changed its style from that of a rural, string band-oriented show to centering around the professional entertainer; through the years, the show has featured the legends of country music, as well as current superstars; and

WHEREAS, as the years passed, WSM-AM's location and technology changed, but the station never lost sight of its roots; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the "Opry," WSM-AM has produced many other quality musical programs, many carried nationally; and

WHEREAS, over the years WSM-AM has employed thousands of musicians, arrangers, and vocalists; the station was a catalyst in bringing the incredible concentration of musical talent to Nashville, which phenomenon would earn our Capital City fame as "Music City USA"; and

WHEREAS, in fact, WSM-AM announcer, David Cobb, was the first person to dub Nashville as "Music City USA" during an ad-libbed comment on the "Red Foley Show" in 1950; and

WHEREAS, throughout the years, the station has been a pioneer in the growth of radio, blazing a trail that many would attempt to follow, though few would even nearly approximate WSM-AM's remarkable quality and success; and

WHEREAS, throughout the station's existence, WSM-AM's management has ensured that the station's contributions to society reach much further than merely delivering entertainment; and

WHEREAS, through the station's cooperation, the WSM-AM broadcast antenna delivered the first transmission to be bounced off the moon, paving the way for the revolution in communications that would be brought about by satellites; and

WHEREAS, when the Ohio River flooded in the late 1930s, devastating Louisville, Kentucky, WSM-AM lent its facility to Louisville's WHAS Radio so emergency messages and information could be broadcast; and

WHEREAS, since the 1930s, WSM-AM has remained one of America's premier news operations and has been first to bring news of countless key world events to the people of this State and our region; and

WHEREAS, in addition to their estimable public service efforts, the station's leadership has striven to remain responsive to their listeners' desires and preferences; and

WHEREAS, on January 14, 2002, Gaylord Entertainment Co. announced that WSM-AM would continue to broadcast "classic country," responding to a massive outcry of public support for the format that is "Too Country and Proud of It!"; and

WHEREAS, though the format will not change, WSM-AM will undoubtedly continue to adapt in other ways in order to provide listeners with the highest possible quality of entertainment and information; and

WHEREAS, efforts will be made to increase brand recognition while restoring the stature of the Grand Ole Opry to that of its 1940s glory days; technological and programming innovations such as satellite radio, high-fidelity digital radio, and "Opry" spin-off shows are just

some of the options being considered as the station leads radio's charge into the new millenium;
and

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that the radio station that created The Grand Ole Opry and serves as the very cornerstone of country music should continue to entertain the Mid-South, the Nation, and all of North America with the inspired artistry of Merle Haggard, George Jones and Patsy Cline, as well as Alan Jackson, George Strait and Faith Hill; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud WSM-AM and its praiseworthy management and employees for their countless contributions to the entertainment and communications industries, to the city of Nashville, and to the Volunteer State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend the good people of WSM-AM, both past and present, for their invaluable contributions to this State and join in celebrating the management's decision for WSM-AM to continue in its time-honored role as the flagship station of classic country music.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we extend to these exceptional professionals our best wishes in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.